

### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action of December 13, 2004, has been carefully considered. It is noted that claims 1, 2, 4-7, 12, 13, 15, 18 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Samejima et al. in view of Khinkas et al.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Samejima et al. in view of Khinkas, and further in view of Breen et al.

Finally, it is noted that claims 8-11, 14, 16, 19 and 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

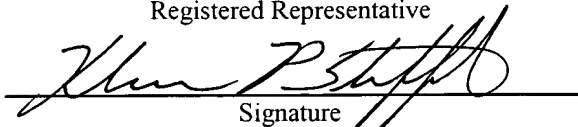
In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims, applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 8. Furthermore, claims 9, 14, 16 and 19 have all been written in independent form.

In view of these changes to the claims, and the Examiner's indication that claims 8-11, 14, 16, 19 and 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections of claims 1, 2, 4-7, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are overcome and should be withdrawn. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are now in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on March 14, 2005:

Klaus P. Stoffel

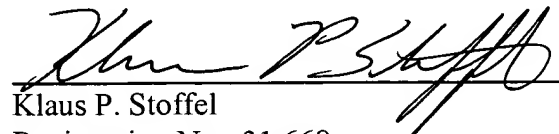
Name of applicant, assignee or  
Registered Representative

  
Signature

March 14, 2005

Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

  
Klaus P. Stoffel

Registration No.: 31,668

OSTROLENK, FABER, GERB & SOFFEN, LLP

1180 Avenue of the Americas

New York, New York 10036-8403

Telephone: (212) 382-0700

KPS:ck